

**OFFICE OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION**

December 16, 2021 – Minutes

Stacy Dagleish, Chair, Presiding

**Minutes Approved: January 27, 2022**

**Motion made, moved by Commissioner Banko, second by Commissioner Cooperberg**

**DISCUSSION**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

- a. Commissioner Root (AE), Commissioner Padilla-Frausto (P), Commissioner Friedman (P), Commissioner Stevens (P), Commissioner Turner (P), Commissioner Dagleish (P), Commissioner Banko (AE), Commissioner Okonji (P), Commissioner Ogawa (P), Commissioner Molina (P), Commissioner Acebo (AE), Commissioner Cooperberg (P), Commissioner Weissman (P), Commissioner Schallert (P), Lily Sofiani (P) – **QUORUM PRESENT**

**Administrative Matters**

**2. Approval of Minutes**

- a. Motion to approve November 2021 minutes, move by Commissioner Ogawa, second by Commissioner Schallert. Motion carries with 1 abstention.

**Public Comment**

**3. Agenda & Non-Agenda Items**

**Esiquio Reyes** – Recommended agencies like Home Team ask homeless individuals a few questions about obtaining meals will determine the best approach to help them adapt to their situation.

**William Legere** – (speech indiscernible) Ms. Sangster emailed William’s comments to MHC). Black Americans and people of color with less wealth translate to systemic barriers, underrepresentation in underserved communities and those in need of special needs such as broadband and tech devices. In addition: We would like to advocate for others to receive broadband and technical devices. Homelessness - a problem that continues Poverty and Homelessness is growing at staggering rates and the chance of students’ rates of drop out is alarming.

**Ernest Cornish** – discussed living in a housing agency occupied by homeless individuals lacks mental health resources like case management.

**Osbee Sangster** – Advocating on behalf of William Legere, who commented recently on homelessness. William does not have access to email or a computer device so if you need his phone contact, I can provide that or I can give it to the operator so that everything is logistically understood.

**Hector Ramirez** - DMH Director summoned consumers to participate at a meeting with Mayor of Sacramento and Darrell Steinberg. Director spoke on behalf of consumers and did not allow consumers to make public comment.

**Presentations**

**4. Department of Mental Health General Updates – Dr. Curley Bonds Department of Mental Health, Chief Medical Director**

SB 317 key initiatives – see supporting documentation for more detail

- Allows competency restoration for individuals with misdemeanors incompetent to stand trial. DMH is working with the courts to identify treatment options and resources available to meet the needs
- Dr. Bonds shared flow chart on how diversion is determined who should be inpatient or outpatient, need medical or psych treatment

## Mental Health Commission Meeting Minutes

December 16, 2021

Page 2 of 4

- Goal is to make accommodations for the group currently in jail, about 400 people per year.

### General Updates

- Department telework percentage is 72%
- Psychiatrists working in person is 30% and 70% in-home
- Vaccine levels among staff are high in the department. The goal is to get everyone back into the clinics.
- DMH launched a wellbeing website with lots of resources for employees

5. Department of Mental Health's ARDI Division – Dr. Jorge Partida, Department of Mental Health, Anti-Racism, Diversity & Inclusion Division Chief  
Dr. Partida presented a power point presentation – see supporting documentation
  - ARDI division has internal and external components. Internal work is countywide to promote antiracism, particularly anti-black racism in the work environment, increase transparency, and inclusion in decision-making. External work is promoting and managing programs to serve populations and communities.
6. Community Reports, SALT, UsCC, CCC Co-Chairs  
**SALT 4 Esiquio Reyes, Co-Chair** - We haven't really been doing that much regarding meeting this month because I think we are in a blackout, but like many of the Co-Chairs, we are still doing our part to help the community. Carmen has left unfortunately, so we are going to be looking for someone to fill her spot as soon as possible and having a full table will help us bring accurate information to DMH. But that is all.

**SALT 5 Penny Mehra, Co-Chair** – Thank you. Happy holidays. Service Area 5 had been struggling with how to provide outreach advancement that would draw people in to increase participation, but we finally made a breakthrough and have events planned. On December 21, we have one coming up and we are excited about that. There is one in January and February as well. There is a meeting about how many of the local neighborhood councils are having issues with mental illness and mental health and have organized the presentation on what services are available and will also promote participation in the SALTs. So, it does feel like a big breakthrough. We had a presentation in our November meeting on the anti-violence authority that deals with domestic violence and other forms of violent relationships, which has increased during the pandemic, so it was very interesting. Kanchana Tate presented on school-based services, and it was nice to know what is going on in our schools with mental health services. We are increasing and have two Co-Chairs, and we are asking for nominations for new Co-Chairs. We have a couple that we will be voting on.

**SALT 7 Rick Pulido, Co-Chair** – Greetings. I hope everybody has a blessed holiday. It has been a novel year again and thank God we are coming to the end and hopefully getting some cures that will help our families and communities. I am the Co-Chair from SALT 7 and we are going to be having our grand opening in January of our Peer Resource Center in the Southeast cities. Also, we will have our first podcast. And two others, and we will ask some of the Commissioners eventually if they would like to be involved with that podcast, which would be there at the studio at the PRC. I also wanted to recommend and highlight how you are right on task, and we appreciate everyone looking out for peers. We have spoken out about this before, having a countywide peer council. Our leadership has come to grips with having a monthly meeting, but they would like to do a Summit next

## Mental Health Commission Meeting Minutes

December 16, 2021

Page 3 of 4

year and get together and speak on their behalf at a quarterly, if you will, peer council. Maybe even have a peer Commission that advises or that is an ad hoc committee. Lastly, I agree that we need our licensed counselors and social workers. I know Long Beach has a great program and the other universities that were mentioned, but we need to do it now. Thank you all for hearing from me. God bless.

**SALT 8 Paul Stansbury, Co-Chair** – Greetings from SALT 8. Happy Holidays and have a great holiday season. A couple of things I wanted to report, and I did submit a written report. We did have a peer specialist certification presentation, which is very important to SALT 8 and especially during this time of staffing shortages, that peer certification is a very important task. We are looking forward to having implementation of the peer employment issue being resolved. We know that it is a way out to get that all developed. There were a couple of issues that came up. One was the grandfathering in of existing peers who have already had some training. The second thing, there was supposed to be a test involved for peers to be certified and so we were concerned about testing anxiety, so we are looking to develop some training or some workshops to help people deal with that issue.

We understand that we are having some Peer Resource centers being developed in other SALTS, which we think is great, but we also want to make sure we have something in SALT 8 as soon as possible so we can also be a part of that. I did want to share that we are having a holiday food giveaway. Thank you for the budget that was provided. We are concerned that, unfortunately, most of SALT 8 was not able to participate and we know it's being done by DMH staff. We know it's a little bit more workload for them, but we wish we could've participated. Finally, we are all looking forward to hybrid meetings. Some people are not yet comfortable with meeting in person, and some are, so we are looking forward to building up the hybrid meetings. Thank you, and happy holidays.

**ACCESS for All Hector Ramirez** – All our consumers are legally considered people with disabilities. So this month we had kind of a grievance ceremony as we lost one of our members. Sunny Whipple, one of our longtime advocates, passed away and so we took that time to do that. We have lost a lot of our consumers during this pandemic; many have come here looking for help and many have died not getting help. At that meeting, we recognized that accessibility to services is still a leading issue with why people are not getting help, specifically our young kids with disabilities. It's not that they don't want services, but they cannot get them through the Department of Mental Health. For us, it is still a top priority. We are also working closely with the Braille Institute and the L.A. Association for Deaf to really increase availability of services, even though we don't have services for them because we don't have accommodations, but we really want to remind folks that the department is here and at least trying to create those services. We recognize that there is a shortage of ASL interpreters and CART services across the state, but we still echo the frustrations that we feel from not getting the services, but at the same time we advocate with the County to increase capacity and staff capacities, because this is now a national pandemic. But here, in L.A. County, we have the largest number of people with disabilities in the country and we feel it the most. So, I thank you all for supporting us in those efforts to be able to obtain services and to better serve our communities that are struggling the most right now, which is our communities of color and peoples with disabilities. Thank you

**BAH UsCC Wendy Cabil, Co-Chair** – Thank you. Season's greetings to you all. I am the only Co-Chair presently for the Black and African Heritage Underserved Cultural Community, so I am glad to share the space and time with you at this final MHC Full Commission meeting in 2021. Our mental

## Mental Health Commission Meeting Minutes

December 16, 2021

Page 4 of 4

health community is grieving the loss of two advocates, Ms. Patricia Russell, and Mr. Sunnie Whipple, the former CCC Co-Chair, which stands for the Cultural Competency Committee. We admire their beautiful personalities and will continue to work as a peer advocate. I recommend adjourning this meeting in their honor today.

On that note, it is time for me to break my silence about my Co-Chair experience in facilitating the Black and African Heritage UsCC. I have completed one year, and we are still needing a second Co-Chair to fill the vacancy for about six months now, minus the times that we went dark. Interest has been generated with a discussion, but eligible nominations are determined by attendance with 50% minimal before any voting occurs.

The fact that transparency is missing with the attendance roster does not help so that we all know who is close to being eligible. Though the Black Mental Health Task Force is making great strides in all their efforts, I want to point to areas that are needing improvement in our group. I'm struggling to be authentic in my Co-Chair role and to perform my role effectively while experiencing various hindrances. I can no longer be silent, and it is causing me great frustration, distress, and aggravating my health conditions, like my depression and insomnia and chronic pain. There are more details forthcoming in my monthly report. And one last thing I wanted to add is that the ARDI presentation was great, Dr. Partida. Thank you.

### 7. Mental Health Crisis in Schools – Commissioner Friedman

Supervisor Solis motioned to design a questionnaire for all 81 different school districts countywide. Results from questionnaire should be available soon and will be shared with MHC. US Surgeon General made a visit to Los Angeles to issue a report. The number one topic in the report was schools have peer groups because kids listen to kids.

### 8. Data Notebook Update – Commissioner Padilla-Frausto

Update tabled

### 9. Chair & Commissioner Reports

Chair Dagleish welcomed MHC new representative from Supervisor Holly Mitchell's district, Lily Sofiani, Assistant Deputy of Homelessness.

**Action Item** – Innovations Program will be ending soon. Please provide an update on the Community Ambassador program (Okonji)

## Adjournment

10. Meeting adjourned in honor of two amazing people, Sunnie Whipple and Patricia Russell.